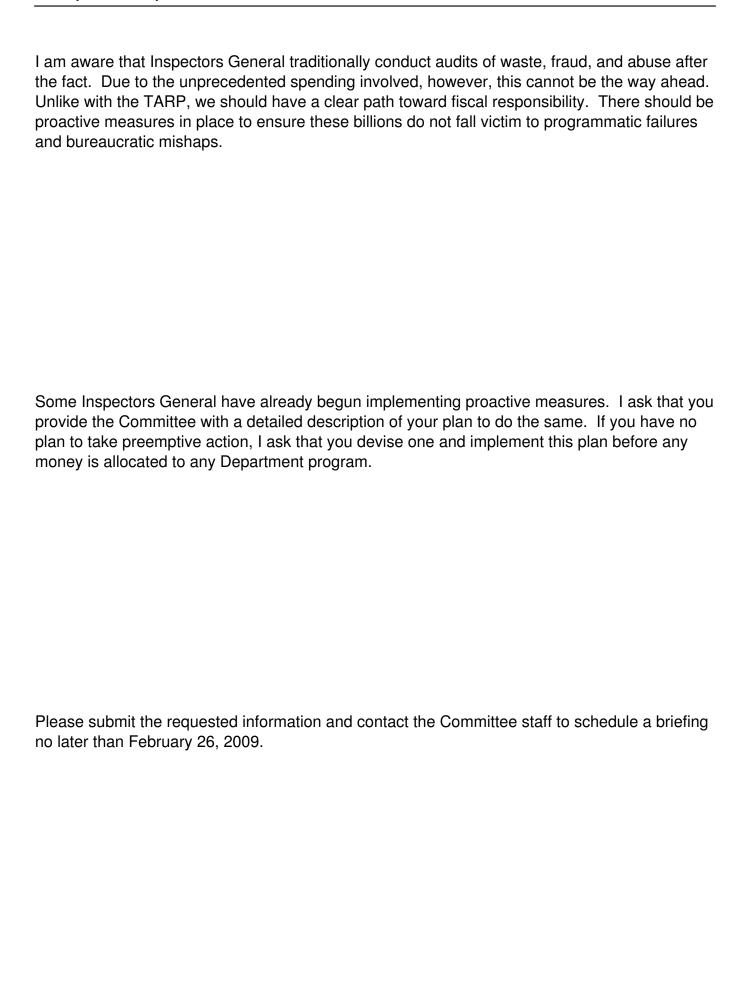


Fiscal Responsibility Not Possible Without Addressing Waste, Fraud, Abuse and Mismanagement Monday, 23 February 2009 00:00
"Any way forward must address the inefficient way in which the federal government administers and manages taxpayer dollars," he cautioned. "For far too long, the bureaucracy has been infected with a mentality that ignores waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement. Federal agencies are being asked to absorb an unprecedented level of new funding and there is no way we can achieve fiscal solvency if we continue to look the other way while hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars go unaccounted for and wasted."
A text of the letter sent to each department Inspector General is provided below:
On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into law. This law allocates nearly \$800 billion to fund government run programs that promise to put Americans to work and stimulate the economy. A sizable portion of this money has been allocated to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Due to the accelerated timeline for disbursement, however, we are concerned the USDA may not be prepared to exact the necessary oversight measures to ensure fiscal responsibility.

Sudden influxes of funds outside the normal appropriations process have traditionally caused programmatic challenges within agencies. If the Troubled Asset Relief Program ("TARP") is any indication, unchecked efforts to rapidly spend billions of dollars involve significant risks of waste, fraud, and abuse, and raise serious questions about the appropriate distribution of taxpayer dollars. With the TARP, there was never a clear idea as to the purpose of the program, how the money was to be spent, and whether American households would actually benefit from the unprecedented spending. Six months later, Americans have been saddled with enormous debt with nothing to show for it. Proper oversight at the inception of the program would have prevented this.

The Inspector General Community can play a critical role in preventing this from happening again. According to the Inspectors General Act, every Inspector General is charged with promoting economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of, and preventing and detecting fraud and abuse in, the programs and operations of their respective departments and agencies. Inspectors General can fulfill this duty in several ways. The most effective method, however, is to conduct thorough assessments of programs and initiatives prior to funding, and to perform continuous oversight throughout the life of a project. In so doing, agencies can maximize efficiency and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse at the outset.



Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if you require any assistance or would like to discuss this request. You may also contact Minority Staff Director Larry Brady or Professional Staff Member Molly Boyl at 202-225-5074.